

**PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE  
PRESIDENTIAL NEWS DESK**

**ARRIVAL STATEMENT BY  
PRESIDENT FERDINAND R. MARCOS JR.  
UPON HIS RETURN FROM HIS PARTICIPATION IN THE 30<sup>TH</sup> APEC  
ECONOMIC LEADERS' MEETING IN SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA  
AND WORKING VISITS TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA AND  
HONOLULU, HAWAII**

[Delivered at the Maharlika in Villamor Air Base in Pasay City | 20 November 2023]

Thank you, ES Luke Bersamin; Vice President Sara Duterte. *[Please take your seats.]*

Those accompanying me in this trip: Speaker Martin Romualdez; our Foreign Affairs Secretary, Secretary Ricky Manalo; and joining us to come back home, the Ambassador --- not permanently, only for a little time --- our Ambassador to the United States, Ambassador Babe Romualdez; and DTI Secretary, Secretary Fred Pascual; also with us was House Deputy Speaker Ralph Recto; and our reception committee every time we come home, first of all to Pasay District Representative Antonino Calixto and Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano; the AFP Vice Chief of Staff Lieutenant General Arthur Cordura and the Major Service Commanders, 'yung ibang commander natin --- ang CS natin naiwan pa sa States at mayroon pa silang tapusin na mga detalye na aming nasimulan; and the PNP Chief General Benjie Acorda; Philippine Coast Guard Commandant Admiral Gavan; and of course the First Lady, First Lady Liza Araneta-Marcos; all my fellow workers in government; ladies and gentlemen, good evening.

I have just concluded a six-day visit to San Francisco, Los Angeles in California, and in Honolulu, Hawaii.

In San Francisco, I joined the Leaders of 20 other Member Economies of APEC and 13 IPEF Member Countries for the 30<sup>th</sup> APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and the 2<sup>nd</sup> IPEF Leaders' Meeting, respectively.

I also held separate meetings with President Xi Jinping of the People's Republic of China; Peruvian President Dina Ercilia Boluarte Zegarra, who is the incoming chairman – Peru is the incoming chairman for APEC for next year; U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris; U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken, and the U.S. Indo-Pacific Command Commander, Admiral John Aquilino.

Our discussions were of course very productive, with innovation, resilience, sustainability, and inclusiveness as cross-cutting themes that are buttressed by our commitment to further strengthening cooperation and to address challenges that are common to all our economies both economic challenges and security challenges.

These reinforced my discussions with leaders during the *APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting*, in which I pushed for our priorities in clean, renewable, and just, and accessible, affordable energy; food security; health systems; digitalization and digital transformation and digital inclusion of MSMEs; and of course climate action through regional cooperation.

We identified concrete ways forward as reflected in intergovernmental agreements concluded during the visit.

One of the most important is the signing of the so-called "123" Agreement, which is a civil nuclear cooperation agreement with the United States. This paves the way for potential nuclear power projects with American providers as well as for streamlining licensing requirements for the private sector with respect to investments on nuclear-related intangible transfers of technology, while ensuring the highest standards of safety, security, and safeguards. This will bring us closer to our vision of a more energy secure and green Philippines.

We must commend both teams, both from the Philippines and the United States because it is my understanding that this 123 Agreement that the US has signed with the Philippines was done in the fastest time that a 123 Agreement has ever been done.

And that is why we have to congratulate both teams for a job well done and thank you to the United States for the support in this matter.

We signed on to the *IPEF Supply Chain Agreement*. It will serve as an important mechanism to improve supply chain transparency and to enable sustainable industry development with respect to critical sectors and critical goods. It will also enhance the role of workers and the promotion of labor rights.

The Agreement provides a framework for mobilizing sustainable investments and technologies and knowledge transfers from IPEF partners, including the United States, to the Philippines.

I also met a number of U.S. companies that are looking to enter Philippine markets, as well as further expand those that have an existing presence and operations in our country. Among them, since we were in San Francisco, we met with leading technology companies and investors from Silicon Valley.

Our discussion focused on our vision of technological inclusivity and shared growth.

So, I look forward to the continuing collaboration between our agencies and these companies as we adapt to emerging technologies such as generative AI to ensure that our regulatory framework and workforce development programs are responsive.

Embracing the use of advanced technologies in the Philippines, we concluded a number of public-private and private sector agreements with U.S. companies.

The DOST and ATMO are partnering on an AI-powered weather forecasting system that will help the Philippines build resilience to climate change.

ASTRANIS and ORBITS CORP have joined forces to bring reliable internet connectivity to unserved and underserved areas in the Philippines. This USD 400 million partnership will be a catalyst for economic growth and digital transformation in the energy sector. Essentially, what that project is about is that now the Philippines is launching a satellite dedicated for the Philippines alone. And this is for communication and this will increase the coverage of our internet providers. And by the way, we named the satellite Agila.

In the energy sector, Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation (USNC) and MERALCO are undertaking *Pre-Feasibility Studies on Micro-Modular Reactors (MMRs)*. This partnership is a significant step towards exploring clean and sustainable energy options for the Philippines. The energy

sector is a cornerstone of the country's industrial growth and development, and the government is continuing to be committed to finding ways to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to increase resilience to climate change.

We were able to sign that Pre-Feasibility Agreement simply because the 123 Agreement with the United States had been perfected and that now gave us the green light to continue with those projects that have really been in the offing, waiting in the wings for the 123 Agreement.

In the pharmaceutical sector, Lloyd Laboratories and DIFGEN Pharmaceuticals have formed the joint venture for the product development and export of pharmaceutical products to the U.S. The Philippines is emerging as one of the fastest-growing pharmaceutical markets in Southeast Asia, and this joint venture is a significant step towards expanding the country's local production share.

In the healthcare sector, AC Health and Varian have embarked on a groundbreaking partnership to improve access to quality cancer care in the Philippines. This Cooperation Agreement is a significant step in the fight against cancer. It reflects the Philippines' growing potential as a leading healthcare destination in Asia.

Altogether, we return to the Philippines with more or less USD 670 million in investment pledges that have the potential to create thousands of direct and indirect jobs for Filipinos within our country.

We look forward to seeing more of these partnerships materialize in the months ahead, especially with the visit of the high-level *U.S. Presidential Trade and Investment Mission* in March next year and we are also co-hosting the *2024 Indo-Pacific Business Forum*.

Just as an explanation, the high-level business delegation that is coming is a delegation that was formed by President Biden himself and upon the request of the Philippines to explore the different opportunities for investment and for operations here in the Philippines, especially in the targeted sectors that we have been speaking about.

And this is in fact a new feature as there has never been a presidential high-level delegation to any country before and that is again because of our continuing strong partnership with the United States.

Of course my visit would not have been complete without engaging with our *kababayans* in the Filipino Communities around the cities where we visited. I had the great pleasure to meet about a thousand of our *kababayans* in each of the three cities that we stopped at, including those from neighboring states, all the way from Alaska, Arizona, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, [and] Washington State. They came all the way to be with us both in San Francisco and in Los Angeles.

As ever, I thanked them for their valuable contributions to their communities in the Philippines and in the United States, including the political achievements of some Filipino Americans. The good words said of Filipinos around the world makes me once again proud to be a *Pinoy*. I encouraged them to unite and to work with us towards building a stronger and more resilient Philippines; *tungo sa isang Bagong Pilipinas*.

And this morning or at least that's what it feels like for me na earlier today, I capped my visit with a speaking engagement at the *Daniel Inouye Asia Pacific Center for Security Studies (DKI APCSS)*, where I shared my reflections on the most crucial challenges to our common aspirations of a peaceful and prosperous future for the Philippines and the region—securing the peace in the West Philippine Sea and securing strategic sectors and critical infrastructures, up to and including cybersecurity and strengthening of our digital space.

Despite the evolving and complex challenges, my message was one of optimism—that together with the U.S., our oldest and only treaty ally, and our growing network of other partners, we will be able to bring peace, stability, [and] prosperity to the Indo-Pacific Region, as long as our partnerships are based on mutual trust and respect for one another as sovereign equals and that our actions are anchored in international law, including the UNCLOS and the 2016 Arbitral Award.

*Maraming salamat at magandang gabi po sa inyong lahat. [applause]*

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